

## MARTIN FORD SR. AND ZIBIAH MERIBA STOKER

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A strange man appeared at the door and

## WALLSBURG BIOGRAPHIES



asked them if they had any sickness in the home. Little Martin's father told him his boy had fallen into a tub of hot water and scalded himself. The stranger told him to take the fresh lard of a pig (he told him what to mix it with) and put on the boy and he would be all right. He then turned and left.

They looked out to see which direction the man was going, but he was nowhere in sight. He hadn't had time to get out of sight. They didn't know where he came from or where he went, but Martin's father went out and killed a pig and did as the man told him, and the burns healed.

That night all the stars in the sky fell. Martin's father carried him out-of-doors so he could watch them fall. My grandfather never forgot that night, and he often told us about it.

Martin Ford Sr. was born in Harmony, Chautauqua County, New York, on April 16, 1832, son of William Ford Sr. of Windham County, Connecticut, and Hannah Lucille Mayo of Berkshire County, Massachusetts. At Trader's Point, on the Missouri River, six miles from Council Bluffs, he became acquainted with and married Zibiah Meriba Stoker about 1852. She was born August 13, 1829, daughter of John W. Stoker and Sarah McDaniel. Zibiah died in Wallsburg on July 20, 1902, and Martin died May 16, 1919.

Soon after Martin Sr.'s birth his parents moved to Nauvoo, where William worked on the temple until it was nearly completed. One day the scaffold on which he was standing broke and he fell about 20 feet, injuring him so he died soon after, leaving a wife and six children. Martin, just 12 years old, was their only support. They were living in Nauvoo when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed by the mob and when

the saints were driven from their homes.

Martin was baptized into the Church by Sidney Rigdon. After the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, Martin bought a yoke of cattle and a wagon. The next spring he and the family left Nauvoo and started west with the second company of saints. They suffered much from the cold, stormy weather. They arrived at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, and stayed during the summer while Martin worked to buy food enough for the next trip. Then they traveled to the Sweetwater in Iowa, where they stayed till the following spring, when they left on their westward journey, finally reaching Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the Missouri River. They moved six miles south to a place called Trader's Point. Martin was about 20 years old now. He worked here three or four years hauling logs for steamboats.

Here he met his future wife Zibiah Stoker, and they were married. Two children were born at Trader's Point. Early in 1856 they moved back to Council Bluffs, where two more children were born.

At this time the rebellion between the North and South was raging. John, the oldest, remembered the soldiers marching past their home.

In the spring of 1862, Martin had planted 40 acres of corn. He was plowing ground to plant more, when he put aside his plow and went to the house and told Zibiah to "start packing, we are going to the Rockies." Next day he sold his crop, bought a yoke of cattle, a yoke of cows and one team of horses. They went to Council Bluffs on the Fourth of July. After securing their supplies for the trip, they crossed the river, where others were making up a train to continue on the journey west.

They decided the train was too long, so appointed another captain, whose name was Woolley. Martin was appointed assistant captain. As they proceeded, wagons broke down and were pulled out of the train. Martin was called to repair them, for he was a carpenter and a wheelwright. So he was kept busy most of the time repairing wagons. Zibiah and her young son John had to drive the wagons all the way across the plains, and when Zibiah was tending the children, John did it alone. He was nine years old then. There were 40 wagons and 150 people in the train.

Church was held on Sunday and whenever they came to a grassy spot they would have a dance. Martin played the violin and they'd dance the "Money Musk" till the dancers couldn't be seen for dust.

The trip was made without incident, except that John's brother William, four years old, was determined to ride like John, with his legs over the front end gate. The wheels dropped in a ditch and he fell down between the horses and a wheel ran over his middle finger, cutting it open. Soon they were in the beautiful mountains. People, cattle and horses were weary as they came out of Emigration Canyon to look over Salt Lake Valley and Great Salt Lake.

They camped where the City and County Building now is. The company disbanded and the Fords went to Provo, where Martin bought a farm on Center St., across from where a cannery later was located. Later he homesteaded in Wallsburg, where the old home still stands.

They spent all their lives pioneering.

Children of Martin Ford: John Ford, Hannah Jane F., Lady Ford, William Ford, Alfred Ford, Mary Etta, Coquella, Martin Ford Jr., Parley Ford and Daisy Pearl Ford.

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